

## ENHANCING PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY THROUGH OPEN GOVERNMENT

*“We want to be the most open and transparent government in the world”*, Prime Minister David Cameron (2010)

Open Data and Transparency may be the most powerful levers of 21st century public policy. They present multiple opportunities offering benefit to the public sector, individuals, businesses and the UK as a whole. Open Data enables accountability; it improves outcomes and productivity in key services through informed comparison; it transforms social relationships – empowering individuals and communities; and it drives dynamic economic growth.

One story indicates how open data and transparency can help to transform a service: Five years ago, Sir Bruce Keogh, then a cardiac surgeon in Birmingham, convinced his fellow cardiac surgeons to publish their individual patient mortality rates. Five years later, death rates have fallen. Sir Keogh’s work demonstrates how transparency compliments the work of our public service professionals, improves public service quality and performance, and saves lives.

But making data open is not enough, we will also establish mechanisms to promote and collate feedback from those actually using the data. And we will use this feedback to improve our services and ensure they respond to real needs.

The UK Government new Transparency Strategy: *“Making Open Data Real”* was published on 4<sup>th</sup> August and is open for public consultation until 27 October 2011 at [www.data.gov.uk/opendataconsultation](http://www.data.gov.uk/opendataconsultation). This, together with the UK’s existing strong record on Transparency and Open Data, means that our focus will fall on the Open Government Partnership grand challenges of:

- Improving Public Services; and
- More Effectively Managing Public Resources.

We will consult publicly on this country action plan primarily via existing fora, including the Public Sector Transparency Board; the Local Public Data Panel and the Transparency Sector Boards that are currently being established. These bodies already advise the Government on wider transparency and Open Data issues. In addition, we will also convene and consult with a wider group of stakeholders to consider the country plan specifically.

### **Open Government Efforts to date**

The Government’s strong focus on increasing public sector accountability, improving public services and more effectively managing public resources, has been reflected in two open letters from the Prime Minister, David Cameron, to his Cabinet. In the first,<sup>1</sup> published in May 2010, the Prime Minister set out a series of specific areas for release of data. All data published is made available in an open format so that it can be re-used by third parties.

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<sup>1</sup> [number10.gov.uk/news/letter-to-government-departments-on-opening-up-data](http://number10.gov.uk/news/letter-to-government-departments-on-opening-up-data)

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From July 2010, government departments and agencies must ensure that any information published includes the underlying data in an open standardised format.

In his second letter on Transparency, published on 7 July 2011,<sup>2</sup> the Prime Minister announced a series of unprecedented commitments to be delivered over the coming year. These are focussed on releasing data that would drive the improvement of public services, in particular: health, education, criminal justice, transport and government financial information.

The UK is determined to have the most ambitious Open Data agenda of any other government and these commitments demonstrate our ambition to make public services more transparent and accountable. A list of new datasets to be released as a result of these commitments is attached at Annex A.

In addition to the specific dataset commitments made in these letters, the following actions have also been taken:

- The establishment of the **Public Sector Transparency Board** to drive forward the Government's agenda. It is chaired by the Minister for the Cabinet Office, Francis Maude, and its members are a mix of data specialists, who challenge public sector bodies in the implementation of transparency and open data standards. One of the Transparency Board's first achievements was the publication of the **Public Data Principles**, which provide behavioural guidance for public bodies on how they need to do business.
- The establishment of **Data.gov.uk**, which was conceived as a core channel to find data. The number of datasets now stands in excess of 6000 and the site is being made easier for the general public to use. Improvements are also being made to make the site more accessible for people who publish data and for developers.
- The creation of the **Open Government Licence**, a licensing model which facilitates the use and re-use of a broad range of public sector information. The licence covers any information that an Information Provider and/or rights owner offers for re-use under its terms and conditions. It is intended to be interoperable, with widely-used models such as Creative Commons and Open Data Commons. It supports the inclusion of machine-readable descriptions and semantic web properties.
- **E-petitions** - in August 2011 the Government launched a new site that gives all citizens the power to influence government policy in the UK. Anybody can create an e-petition about anything that the Government is responsible for and if it gets at least 100,000 signatures, it will be eligible for debate in the House of Commons.
- In January 2011, Cabinet Office Minister Francis Maude commissioned an **independent review of the impact of Transparency on privacy**. The review, published on 13 September 2011, serves to ensure that as the Government develops its transparency agenda, it continues to uphold high standards of personal privacy. In addition, it will support officials and Ministers in ensuring that on-going releases of data are done in a way that provides maximum transparency as well as appropriate protection safeguards.

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<sup>2</sup> [number10.gov.uk/news/letter-to-cabinet-ministers-on-transparency-and-open-data](http://number10.gov.uk/news/letter-to-cabinet-ministers-on-transparency-and-open-data)

There is still far more to be done – at present the reality for citizens is that getting access to meaningful data about their public services can still be difficult and is sometimes impossible. Equally for enterprise, particularly start-ups and small and medium enterprises (SMEs), getting access to data that helps grow businesses may be difficult or close to impossible. The quality of data that is currently published is often poor, and publication may be intermittent, which is unhelpful for business in particular. Standards do not exist across departments or wider public bodies, so it is difficult to make comparisons. Data may be published without clear explanations of context, meaning that in reality it is difficult to use. Fundamentally, the right to continued access to a dataset, once released, does not exist. The culture within the public sector and with public service providers is not currently focused on making data available.

### **New commitments**

The UK's commitments as a member of the Open Government Partnership are formed from three parts:

**1) the commitments proposed as part of the Open Data Consultation** published by the Cabinet Office on 4th August 2011. These set out six different aspects of value to citizens and taxpayers; users of public services; businesses; and to government and public service providers:

- Accountability
- Supporting informed choices
- Public service productivity
- Public service quality
- Social growth
- Economic growth

Six levers have been identified as presenting opportunities for change, creating both demand for data and supporting and enabling supply. **These levers are set out for consultation, so the details below may be subject to change. This plan will be updated following the closing of the consultation process at the end of October 2011. Final policy decisions on these options are due to be published in an Open Data White Paper.**

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Lever	Details	Milestones
<p><b>1. Right to data.</b></p> <p><b>Stronger rights for citizens to empower them to obtain data from the public sector</b></p>	<p><b>This will be in the form of:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a new power held by appropriate independent organisations to secure the release of valuable public datasets, with a suitable format, quality and regularity of publication;</li> <li>• meaningful disincentives for public bodies and public servants found to have withheld data that should have been released;</li> <li>• maximum time limits for how long public bodies can review appeals against Freedom of Information Act (FOI) refusals;</li> <li>• altered procurement rules to ensure that data created by government is stored in IT systems which minimise the cost and difficulty of publishing data online;</li> <li>• a new, higher cost cap for FOI for data held within IT systems procured after July 2012; and</li> <li>• mandating a phased introduction of 'Public by Default', delivered through a new generation of IT systems and accompanying policies.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>2. Setting standards.</b></p>	<p>This will be done by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• formalising, through a Code of Practice or opt-in process, the Public Data Principles articulated by the Public Sector Transparency Board;</li> <li>• making clear the minimum that citizens can expect on publication and quality of data. This will include compliance with the Public Data Principles;</li> <li>• ensuring a line of continuous improvement for public service providers in achieving the highest ratings for their published data when compared against the Five Star Rating for Open Data</li> <li>• setting out how citizens can challenge where there is failure in the process (although we expect the public will rarely need to revert to this because data will be proactively published);</li> <li>• having in place an Open Data compliance monitoring process which outlines how, when and where public service providers should report their progress;</li> <li>• establishing an obligation to consider and, if appropriate, act on user feedback. This</li> </ul>	<p><b>The UK Government Licensing Framework was published on 1 August 2011.</b></p>

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	<p>will be the case even where it has been collected independently of the public body or public service provider;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• making clear that, with very narrow restrictions, licences must cover free, commercial re-use with public service providers not normally selling data. We will build on the successful Open Government Licence (OGL), which makes re-use of Crown Copyright and Crown Database material free for commercial and non-commercial purposes, to create one or more licences which will be prescribed for public bodies where they are making datasets available for re-use. In most cases, the expectation will be that this licence will be the OGL;</li> <li>• merge information asset registers, publication schemes and other data lists over time into a single data inventory, alongside which would sit the 'unlocking service' that provides for citizens and business to make request for datasets not currently published or planned to be published;</li> <li>• encourage continuous improvement by adoption of recommended publication formats appropriate to the context;</li> <li>• set consistent expectations of the appropriate quality of meta-data; and</li> <li>• for standardised data co-ordinated across government, set the definitions of the data to be provided and their context.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>3. Corporate and personal responsibility</b></p>	<p>This will be done by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• introducing a corporate responsibility at Board level to ensure that the right to data is being met (for the organisation and all service providers in the public, private and third sectors) based on the Caldicott Guardian model<sup>3</sup>;</li> <li>• strengthening the role and broadening the membership of the Public Sector Transparency Board chaired by the Minister for Cabinet Office;</li> <li>• bringing the Sector Transparency Board model to other parts of the public sector which hold datasets of greatest value. These will bring input from experts to support and challenge government in making more data public. These boards could ensure</li> </ul>	<p><b>Sector specific Transparency Boards are being established, as set out in the Prime Minister's letter of 7 July 2011.</b></p>

<sup>3</sup> Caldicott Guardian is a senior person responsible for protecting the confidentiality of patient and service-user information and enabling appropriate information-sharing. The Guardian plays a key role in ensuring that the NHS, Councils with Social Services responsibilities and partner organisations satisfy the highest practicable standards for handling patient identifiable information.

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	<p>that data publication is prioritised to deliver the maximum benefit; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reviewing the existing governance and regulatory model for public sector information in government.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>4. Collecting and publishing the right data</b></p>	<p>This will be done by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• establishing a framework for public service providers to have common, consistent and transparent data inventories outlining what datasets are held, and whether they are open or not, using standards set by central government. Inventories would need to be built in a modular way, over time, and should begin with high priority data;</li> <li>• developing a clear methodology to support intelligent inventories that are prioritised by value;</li> <li>• ensuring a clear process to support a reduction in collections of ‘unnecessary data’, which maximises opportunities to streamline the volume of data we collect, and ensures resources are focused on collecting essential data; and</li> <li>• developing data.gov.uk and identifying other digital channels to support users in finding and accessing relevant high quality data and easy to use tools and applications.</li> </ul>	<p><b>A pilot inventory is being created as part of the work on a Public Data Corporation and scheduled for end 2011.</b></p>
<p><b>5. Maximise the opening up of data</b></p>	<p>This will be done by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• routinely publishing evidence and databases behind policy statements in the way that currently happens around Budget statements;</li> <li>• routine publication of the data underlying surveys at the same time as the survey analysis is published; and</li> <li>• examining ways for improving the use of existing published data for policy and research purposes.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>6. Stimulating the market for innovative use of open data</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public service providers are to report each year on how they are building collaborative relationships with the user community, including the commercial sector, which promote use of data.</li> </ul>	

## 2) Overseas development aid: transparency and accountability

The UK Government will include the OGP eligibility criteria and related datasets in our overall assessment processes which determine the readiness of partner governments for UK budget support.

This will further strengthen our approach which is based on robust assessments of partner governments' commitment to improving public financial management; strengthening human rights; increasing domestic accountability and reducing poverty. We will also use our commitment to spend up to 5% of budget support (as additional funds) on strengthening local accountability to support progress against related OGP goals.

We will publish aid information from all government departments who spend overseas development assistance (ODA) in line with the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) standards, extending coverage to other departments in addition to the Department for International Development. Within 12 months, we will have agreed a clear timetable for publication of aid information with relevant departments.

## 3) UK Government ICT Strategy

Access to data offers key benefits by enabling access to online transactional services, which makes life simpler and more convenient for citizens and businesses (for instance in accessing and applying for student loans or jobseeker's allowance) and offers channels to collaborate and share information with citizens and business. This in turn enables the innovation of new online tools and services.

For these reasons the Government will work to make citizen-focused transactional services '*digital by default*.' Where appropriate this will be done by using **Directgov** as the single domain for citizens to access public services and government information. Direct.gov.uk is the UK Government's digital service for all citizens, providing a single point of access to public sector information and services. The site receives more than fifteen million visits a month, from around eight million unique users.

For those for whom digital channels are less accessible (for example, some older or disadvantaged people) the Government will enable a network of 'assisted digital' service providers, such as Post Offices, UK online centres and other local service providers.

The Government will open its data and application interfaces in ways that encourage businesses and social providers to develop new market opportunities. For example, the website Mumsnet uses Directgov tools built on standardised interfaces to provide their users with official up-to-date information on schools and family services.

The Government believes that citizens should be able to read government documents with the standardised document format reader of their choice. The first wave of compulsory **open standards** will determine, through open consultation, the relevant open standard for all government documents.

The following actions will also be taken:

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- To ensure that appropriate data is transparent and shared rather than duplicated, the Government will implement engagement processes for open data standards activity and crowd-source priority areas for data standards
- To make citizens' lives simpler and easier, the Government will mandate 'channel shift' (move online) in selected government services
- To open up new, innovative services from a diverse range of providers, the Government will create cross-government standards on APIs and develop a quality assurance 'kite-mark'
- To facilitate a two-way dialogue with citizens, departments will ensure that an online channel is included in all government consultations
- To embed social media as a mainstream channel used routinely to engage with citizens, business and internally, the Government will develop practical guidelines on departmental access to the internet and social media channels
- The establishment of standardised formats for user satisfaction data so that users can compare and contrast their experience of the service they receive with that of others.



## **Annex A**

*The list of new datasets to be released as a result of the recent letter from the Prime Minister:*

- Data on comparative clinical outcomes of GP practices in England to be published by December 2011, following the lead of the NHS in London which has agreed a set of 22 indicators with local GPs
- Prescribing data by GP practice to be published by December 2011, as per the Growth Review
- Complaints data by NHS hospital so that patients can see what issues have affected others and take better decisions about which hospital suits them. This commitment will be met by October 2011
- Clinical audit data, detailing the performance of publicly funded clinical teams in treating key healthcare conditions, will be published from April 2012. This service will be piloted in December 2011 using data from the latest National Lung Cancer Audit, commissioned by the Healthcare Quality Improvement Partnership (HQIP) as part of the National Clinical Audit and Patient Outcomes Programme (NCAPOP)
- Data on staff satisfaction and engagement by NHS provider (for example by hospital and mental health trust) will be published from December 2011
- Data on the quality of post-graduate medical education by provider will be published from April 2012.
- Data enabling parents to see how effective their school is at teaching high, average and low attaining pupils across a range of subjects, to be published from January 2012
- Opening up access to anonymised data from the National Pupil Database to help parents and pupils to monitor the performance of their schools in depth, from June 2012. This will enable better comparisons of school performance and we will look to strengthen datasets in due course
- Bringing together for the first time school spending data, school performance data, pupil cohort data and Ofsted judgements, from January 2012, in a parent-friendly portal, searchable by postcode
- Data on attainment of students eligible for pupil premium to be published from January 2012
- Data on apprenticeships paid for by HM Government, by organisation and by success rate, to be published from July 2011.
- Sentencing data by court will be published by November 2011, enabling the public to see exactly what sentences are being handed down in their local courts, and

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compare different courts on a wide range of measures. The data, anonymised, will include the age, gender and ethnicity of those sentenced, the sentence given, and the time taken at each stage from offence to completion of the case in court

- Data on performance of probation services and prisons including re-offending rates by offender and institution, to be published from October 2011
- From May 2012, the national crime mapping website, Police.uk, will provide the public with information on what happens next for crime occurring on their streets, i.e. police action and justice outcomes.
- In addition to opening up data owned by DfT and its arms length bodies, we are committed to working with the transport industry and data users to make public transport data open and freely available for re-use. Over the next year we will deliver:
- Data on current and future roadworks on the Strategic Road Network will be published from October 2011, and subject to consultation extended during 2012 to Local Authority Streetworks Registers maintained under statute
- All remaining government-owned free datasets from Transport Direct, including cycle route data and the national car park database to be made available for free re-use from October 2011
- Real time data on the Strategic Road Network including incidents, speeds and congestion to be published from December 2011
- Office of Rail Regulation to increase the amount of data published relating to service performance and complaints by May 2012
- Rail timetable information to be published weekly by National Rail from December 2011.
- We are working with the purchase and payment card providers to provide a consistent method of reporting government procurement card spend data for transactions above £500 in value, so this is available for publication on departmental websites, from end September 2011.